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ABSTRACT

This document, the fifth of seven essays, investigates the relationship of the church, the university and urban society in the area of urban curricula and the liberal arts college. Particular attention is placed on "urban semester" programs and their conceptual and practical weaknesses. Alternative ways for addressing a critical dimension of modern society are discussed. Emphasis is placed upon the role of the "citizen", "social invention", and the academic politics of the liberal arts efforts to respond to urban needs. Related documents are HE 004 355, HE 004 366, and HE 004 356. (Author/MJM)

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URBAN CURRICULA AND THE LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

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Parker J. Palmer

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PREFACE

As one of these essays indicates, a project on "Church, University and Urban Society" calls to mind the classic question, "Define the universe and give two examples." The size of the subject is matched by the variety of responses which colleges, universities, and churches have been making in recent years to the urban scene, and by the urgency, not always supported by clear directions, which they have felt seeking to confront the pressures and demands of urban America.

The Department of Higher Education of the National Council of Churches, together with the boards of higher education of a number of denominations, came to believe in the late 1960's that the problems of urban society were some of the important intersections of common concern between church and university.

The Department was pleased, therefore, to receive in early 1969 a substantial grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation which was joined with special funds from church agencies, both in higher education and national missions, for a two-year action-research project on "Church, University and Urban Society." Defining the issues has been a continuing task of the study itself, as will be seen in these reports, but the basic purpose of the project was to discover ways in which to increase the capacity and the commitment of churches and academic institutions to meet the problems of urban society.

The project was carried on from mid-1969 to mid-1971 by two able sociologists, Dr. Elden E. Jacobson and Dr. Parker J. Palmer, Senior Associates in the Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies, Washington, D.C. Dr. Jacobson received his Ph.D. in the sociology of religion in 1966 from Yale University and Dr. Palmer received his in sociology in 1970 from the University of California at Berkeley. Both men had research and teaching experience before coming to the Washington Center and both participated

in the comprehensive Danforth Study of Campus Ministries, undertaken by the late Kenneth Underwood and published under the title, The Church, the University, and Social Policy (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1969).

Elden Jacobson and Parker Palmer were eminently qualified for this current study by their academic training and their search for new styles of professional life, by their religious commitment and their search for new modes of corporate religious responsibility. The Department of Higher Education is deeply grateful to them for the imagination and insight they have brought to this undertaking. We are particularly pleased that the ideas and styles they have developed in this project will receive a continuing embodiment in a new center to which they will be attached, the Institute for Public Life in Silver Spring, Maryland.

The following persons served on an Advisory Commission to the "Church, University and Urban Society" project:

Morris T. Keeton, Vice-President of Antioch College, Chairman
Edwin G. Bennett, National Staff, Team for Ministry in Higher Education, Episcopal Church
William Cannon, Vice-President for Programs and Projects, University of Chicago
Harvey Cox, Associate Professor, Church and Society, Harvard Divinity School
Charles W. Doak, Campus Minister, University of California at Los Angeles
Brooks Hays, Director of Ecumenical Studies, Wake Forest University, former Congressman from Arkansas
John Jordan, Executive Secretary, Office of University World, National Division, Board of Missions of the United Methodist Church
Arthur Paris, Graduate Student in Sociology, Northwestern University
Hans B. C. Spiegel, Professor of Urban Affairs, Hunter College of the City University of New York
George Todd, Associate for Urban and Industrial Ministries (Board of National Missions), and Secretary, Joint Office of Urban and Industrial Ministries (with COEMAR), United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.
Charles Z. Wilson, Jr., Assistant Vice-Chancellor for Educational Planning and Program, University of California at Los Angeles

The Department of Higher Education is indebted to Dr. Morris Keeton, chairman, and all the members of this Commission for the time they gave to meetings and occasional special assignments, and for the advice and interaction of ideas they afforded the staff throughout the project.

It will be understood that the freedom of the staff, Elden Jacobson and Parker Palmer, is enhanced by issuing these reports over their own names. They do not necessarily express the views either of the Advisory Commission or the Department of Higher Education.

The Department expresses its gratitude to the Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies for making possible the services of the staff, to the Sloan Foundation and church agencies for providing financial support, and again to Messrs. Jacobson and Palmer for giving themselves so generously to it.

William N. Lovell
Executive Director
Department of Higher Education
National Council of Churches

INTRODUCTION

Church-University-Urban Society. Such is the fashion--old coin for academic and theologian alike--by which our pretensions exceed our reach. This booklet, one of seven in a series, is the work of two academic sociologists, invited by the Department of Higher Education, National Council of Churches, to investigate the marvelous amorphousness this project's title suggest. For two years we have invested nearly all of our professional interest and time, and a good bit privately, in exploring these three ideas--two institutions and a given context--both as separate, identifiable foci of curiosity and as interacting social institutions in this society's increasingly urbanized work and life.

The style has been activist; we have not hesitated to intervene when invited to do so, and we have likewise set into motion a variety of projects in which all involved were self-consciously pressing for more-adequate ways of "getting it together." So it is, we argue, that one learns.

The possibilities, of course, were overwhelming; our response partial and uneven. Yet it is not mere modesty or a sense of caution that leads us to say so. This project was originally but one of six major, interrelated inquiries conceived in 1968 by nationally known academics and churchmen, inquiries that spanned quite nearly the whole of higher education. Yet the practical realities--of time and money and political power --were such that only some parts survived, this one funded at one-eighth the amount initially sought. An instructive process, to be sure, one depressingly illustrative of the usual manner this society seems bent upon confronting the demonic forces now corroding its inward parts, wherein the grandeur of purpose seems dramatically at odds with achieved result. We mean no disrespect to our immediate sponsors; on the contrary, the Department of Higher Education, and our parent institution, the Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies, have shared with us that extra mile in amazingly good grace. But the lack of careful, sophisticated, thoughtful

experimentation with new forms and new potentials within both church and university is dispiritingly evident to those who have looked. This society's capacity for selective inattention seems scarcely capable of overstatement.

Yet straws there are--often laden with rhetoric and self-protection--but straws none-the-less. And it is those straws that commanded our greater attention as they, first in fact were and are, and as, secondly, situations that hold wider promise. As the briefest of introductions to these seven papers, the following descriptive statements are offered to the reader:

1. The Church, the University and Urban Society: A Problem in Power.
   In this essay, we describe the basic conceptual focus and theoretical framework of the two-year project. Urban society is defined in terms of power, and the role of church and university in it is viewed as essentially marginal unless and until they enter at the point of power. Varieties of power are assayed and strategies for their use are discussed. The essay forms a backdrop for much we have written elsewhere in this series.
2. The Church, the University and Urban Society: Focus on the Church.
   This essay focuses the general concerns of the project on the church. In it, we are particularly concerned with the parish or congregation, that much-neglected but essential component of the church at large. We also explore some of the problems inherent in the specialized ministries (particularly campus and urban), national offices and agencies, and the seminaries.
3. The Church, the University and Urban Society: Implications for the University.
   This essay explores the conceptual, that is to say, the disciplinary, basis of the modern university. In it we conclude that the changing nature of social reality is increasingly undermining fragmented disciplinary inquiry, which in turn is and will continue

to constitute the universities' real "irrelevance." Because we see no grounds for believing that it will fundamentally re-order itself, alternatives to the university will be, and are being, created.

4. The Power of Development: Some Possibilities We See.
This is an analysis, from our experience, of middle-and upper-middle-class suburban life, and the crisis of authority now endemic within social institutions--with emphasis upon the church --that purport to serve this society. We believe these two phenomena are closely related and that church bureaucrats have not been particularly imaginative in their treatment of either. The question of "development" is explored as one partial means of rethinking national/local relationships.

5. Urban Curricula and the Liberal Arts College.
This is a report of our examination of the liberal arts colleges' response to things "urban," with particular attention to "urban semester" programs and their conceptual and practical weaknesses. Drawing sharp distinctions between universities and colleges, we have tried to suggest alternative ways for addressing what is surely a critical dimension of modern society; the focus now upon the role of "citizen" and "social invention." We have also commented at length on the academic politics of getting from here to there.

6. Action-Research: A New Style of Politics, Education and Ministry.
In this manual, we describe a basic methodology of the project, "action-research." The essay is of the "how to do it" breed, with a detailed description of the stages in an action-research project, some of the basic research tools, and suggestions regarding organization. Action-research, in which research is conceived as a process of political action, has demonstrated its utility as a training device for professionals and students and as an organization tool for citizens' groups wishing to make an impact in their community.

7. The Public Life: Its Decline and Renewal.
This final essay in the series articulates our concern for the "public life" in the context of church, university and urban society. For us, the public life involves not only traditional political institutions and processes, but the emerging options to them. We discuss the question of options as a critical one, given the crisis of contemporary life and politics. This essay also has a strong "how to do it" dimension in its description of one of the field experiments which continue beyond the life of the larger project--the Institute for Public Life. It is in the Institute that we continue to act out the implications of our two-year effort for the National Council of Churches.

As with these seven essays so, too, with the project itself: they emerge from two persons whose unity of purpose and mutuality of spirit have come to constitute unique experiences for us both. Written words, self-evidently, must finally derive from a single pen and for the sake of form, names appear on each title page with the principal writer cited first. Authorship, however, is fully shared--in concept, result, and intensity of feeling--and we make no distinctions in our defense of and responsibility for the whole of this series.

Each essay has been written to stand largely on its own merits; as such, repetition occurs from time to time, from one piece to the others. We trust it will not distract the carefully attentive reader.

We warmly acknowledge our considerable indebtedness to the Reverend William N. Lovell, Director of the Department of Higher Education, and Dr. Royce Hanson, President of the Washington Center. Both of these men were very supportive without imposing direction, and we moved with complete freedom in the shaping of this inquiry of involvement. We wish also to thank the members of our Advisory Commission; despite the inadequacies of this particular form of securing advice and assistance, several

of these men served both us and the people we studied in exemplary fashion. We likewise thank that multitude of people who literally reside from coast to coast within those situations we discuss. They have taught us much, and are thereby responsible, to a most considerable degree, for whatever merit our writings contain.

All deficiencies of analysis and interpretation are, of course, ours alone.

Elden E. Jacobson and Parker J. Palmer
Washington, D. C.
June, 1971

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I. INTRODUCTION

"What's that?" asked the youngster. "That's a dinosaur bone." "No, I mean that." "Oh, that's sand."

"Of ccurse we can make the future, for no one else is in charge here."

Wilbert Moore, past president
American Sociological Association

Higher education in recent years has been inundated not only by events and disorders almost no one previously thought possible but also by hoards of academic surgeons bent upon institutional vivisection, usually in the name of scholarly analysis. Not the least bit surprisingly, then, the questions being asked have become increasingly redundant, the responses increasingly predictable. This is one more such effort. Yet we write it because, for all its self-examination and protestations of virtue, academe still exhibits a remarkable capacity for buying the same old pig in only marginally differentiated pokes. And perhaps nowhere does this capacity seem more evident than within the liberal arts college and its generally standard response to things "urban."

Our concerns in this essay are quite specific, and come to these:

1. The importance of urbanization, and the programming now offered by many liberal arts colleges as an acknowledgment of that importance.

2. An attempt at more-adequate conceptualization of the meaning of "urban," especially its implications for curricular reform, indeed for revitalizing the liberal arts generally.

3. Some thoughts about strategy that offer promise of transcending the usually constricted, traditional decision-making processes typical of most small campuses.

What we shall argue derives from our study of urban programs and from our own experimentation. And we write primarily for that handful of students, faculty and administrators who, found on most college campuses, recognize the deficiencies that presently characterize much of "liberal education."

II. THE PRESENT RESPONSE OF THE LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

Theology to the contrary, there seems to persist in the American mind a belief that salvation is a corporate activity. How else can one understand the following assertion from the Educational Facilities Laboratories, Inc.?:

> The nation's colleges and universities . . . can and should be a prime resource and a catalyst in the remaking of the cities and the treatment of the deep-seated ills wracking the urban society.

Or, this statement from the president of Brandeis University:

> Our society is in deep trouble. The university has the capacity to redeem or reform society if the university has the will and is itself reformed.

Even Archibald MacLeish's lyricism has little constraint:

> For it is only the university in this technological age which can save us from ourselves. [Such ringing declarations of academic high purpose at least remind us of what we seem unlikely to forget: higher education is indeed an important ingredient within the modern world. But as an instrument of redemption and reform? As catalyst in remaking the society?

Beyond the rhetoric of these particular instances, however, lies the critical if obvious recognition that urban malaise is a profound and depressing reality for ever-increasing numbers within this society, and that trends presently observable within our central cities can no longer be viewed as isolated and containable. We are an urban nation, by almost any definition of that notion. We live in a society characterized by high-density clusterings of people responding to forces and events largely unknown in previous agrarian societies. And to the extent that a future is knowable, these clusterings, forces and events can be expected to intensify.

Not surprisingly, things "urban" have become much in vogue these days within the academic world. Mounting pressure from without has re-enforced a growing concern from within: how can universities and colleges become, as they say, "relevant" to pressing social need? How, indeed? Hear Mayor Lindsay, who puts the issue somewhat more baldly than most: "Universities are emerging as one of the largest and most interesting employee groups in the city, and we should make sure they are used to full advantage." For its part, the university community has responded with a proliferation of "urban centers" or "institutes for urban affairs," and "urban studies" is now an identifiable segment within the graduate curriculum of scores of major universities. Many such institutions are themselves residents of our largest metropolitan areas and have newly discovered through that magical alchemy which so often makes virtue of necessity, their immediate surroundings as "an urban laboratory" and a "focus of intellectual inquiry." Nor are these attentions entirely devoid of educational philosophy; as the president of George Washington University recently announced:

> . . . this philosophy [meaning the land-grant system], coupled with the onrushing needs of the area, makes it mandatory that all colleges and universities respond to these needs with all possible haste and every ounce of effort. (Emphasis added.)

Small wonder, then, that the liberal arts college, typically located in what seem to be rural or semi-rural settings, and peopled with individuals who for the most part profess limited interest and less competence in these matters, demonstrates confusion and ineptitude when it attempts to incorporate "urban" concerns into its on-going life. And, unlike the large private and public institutions, liberal arts colleges have not usually been the recipients of governmental and industrial largess. The sum of these deficiencies is hence predictable: urban concerns within the small college--whether urban semester programs away or departmental courses within--seem demonstrably minimal in visibility and effect.

We have focused our study of these matters primarily on urban semester programs; they are, at least for the moment, both popular and, as such things go, ambitious. To the extent that the conceptual inadequacies we discuss below are in fact actual ones, however, our findings are likely to be germane to urban programs generally. Recognizing that the very act of generalizing neither adequately describes nor does full justice to any existing activity, most urban semester programs appear to share the following characteristics:

1. "Urban" is interpreted primarily as a spatial category, equated with geography and place. Hence "urban" has to do with those places where the college is not--New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Harrisburg, Los Angeles, etc.--and is imagined to be understandable only as another semester away from the campus is created. And, though the rhetoric and ostensible intent are frequently to the contrary, urban has been further constricted to mean inner-city, poor, problem-plagued and Black. Hence nearly all programs with which we are familiar have elected to locate within or at the fringes of the given area's ghetto. As one program phrases it:

   > Still another important element of the Program . . . is that students work with powerful, non-academic people. Students are confronted formally and informally with articulate, angry, sophisticated Black people who want the system to meet them at the point of their needs, and who ask the students to justify their presence in . . . in terms of the needs of a Black community.

2. "Urban," as reflected in the usual urban semester, revolves around the experiential and individualistic; the emphasis, and appeal, is upon living in an essentially alien environment. As one would have it:

   > The staff sees its responsibility as that of confronting the students with the dramatic and gripping events of the city, enabling them to become a part of the enormous struggle to renew the city.

   Simply learning to cope with the day-to-day routine of personal maintenance--housing, meals, use of such public facilities (transportation, for example) as may be available--is explicitly offered as a value to be desired and an end

to be sought. Students, it is hoped, will come to feel and empathize with minority people; an "urban plunge," several said, and one program explicitly calls for "living in the home of an inner-city family."

3. "Urban" is understood to be a study of what is. Most utilize phrases like "Urban Seminar" or "Seminar on the City" whose defined intent is "to expose the students . . . to the broad range of problems impinging upon the city." These are most commonly seminars--"courses" is perhaps the more descriptive appellation, given the format and numbers of students so involved--into which are invited "city and state leaders or experts in various phases of 'urbanology.'" Again, the intent is to "cover" such facets of urban life as

> welfare institutions, police departments, poverty, transportation, recreation, churches, organizations of local government, health facilities, and educational institutions.

Too, most expect that each student will serve as an "intern" (a word now distended to cover almost any activity not circumscribed by classroom walls) in an area usually dictated by the student's own disciplinary choice; education majors thus "student teach" or become "participant observers in one of a broad variety of educational programs," while students whose previous college classroom work classifies them as "social science majors" predictably find placement in governmental or social service offices. Most programs also hold out the hope that internships will prove to be reciprocally beneficial, that "city" as well as "student" learn in the bargain.

In short, urban semester programs provide both rationale and physical setting for a small minority of self-selected students who, during a period of a semester or a quarter, live and work within the inner-city of some large metropolitan area. Both of these acts--living (or perhaps with more precision, coping) and working, normally understood as location within some public or quasi-public institution or bureaucracy--are thought to significantly "help students understand, at first hand, the problems of the urban environment, and also challenge them to care . . . during the rest of their lives."

And so they may. For there is no denying the initial charm and logic at work in any activity whose manifest purpose has to do with fostering more-enlightened and sensitive natures in college students. There is, too, a kind of self-evidence at work in such programs; "urban" is obviously at least partially synonymous with "inner city" and the "urban problems" so readily attributed to it. There can scarcely be serious doubt, moreover, that significant numbers of students, themselves the products of sequestered suburban enclaves, have never seriously confronted the debilitating liabilities society imposes upon those Black or poor or both, and for them, the capacity to empathize seems crucial.

We are left, however, with a host of unresolved dilemmas, both conceptual and practical. Is "urban" really exhausted, for example, by the limited imagery we have seen thus far? Is it actually the case that intern programs enhance understanding? Of what? Is it reasonable to suppose that the simple act of living for a semester at the physical, psychological and sociological fringes of the central city (read: ghetto) does in fact promote empathy? And after empathy, what? Have competencies been acquired through which expressions of concern can be translated into power and direction? The evidence seems, thus far, both meagre and inconclusive; with one or two notable exceptions, urban semester programs are either so new, or so tightly self-protective that accurate assessment, at this writing, is probably not possible. These are not, however, entirely inconsequential questions, if the enthusiasm already evident among a large segment of liberal arts colleges for an "urban component" is in fact a precursor to wider attention and emulation. And we suppose it is. Such programs, and their numerous variants around themes like ecology and "the woman question," appear likely to proliferate. The fundamental issue for us is, therefore, easily stated: Will such programs help re-invest the liberal arts with a meaning and purpose they so demonstrably do not now have, or will they remain simply safety valves, as it were, for liberal arts colleges whose performance increasingly sounds like one hand clapping?

Nor do we pose the question from mere scratchiness; as Kenneth Boulding has observed, repeatedly it is "spurious saliency," the "dramatic quality of events" that impells curriculum and institutional reform; issues of actual or intrinsic importance, either to the perceived educational objectives of the college itself or to the social system at large, seem largely honored in the breach. It is simply an historical fact, for example, that urban programs and urban semesters blossomed only after the Watts conflagration introduced for all to see a new chapter in modern urban life. Here, as elsewhere, college and university have charged into the fray with torch held aloft; the wonder is that so few even now seem to recognize the time is high noon.

III. HOW IT MIGHT BE DIFFERENT

Could it be otherwise? We do not know, of course; colleges seem congenitally defective when the implications of learning theory are at issue. But maybe. And how it could is intimately related to the limitations we see, or think we see, in those programs we have already briefly described. In this section of our discussion, therefore, we seek to examine their principal assumptions. We will be critical, encouraged in our criticism by the knowledge that many of these programs' participants both hear and share our concerns for the present and a common vision of what might yet be.

1. The Inadequate Definition of "Urban."

"Other colleges," a chaplain wrote to us some months ago, "find themselves in the same condition we experience: in a rural setting in an urban world." We were impressed by this comment, not only for the contradiction it implies, but more germanely for the intuitions he expresses. "In a rural setting," he said, and few would quarrel with his intended meaning. Located almost a hundred miles from the Detroit-Toledo metropolitan complex, the community in question numbers somewhat less than 30,000 people, and although it straddles major transportation arteries, farming remains the surrounding area's primary industry. Such are the characteristics that presumably warrant the urban semester this man so ardently advocated for like-situated colleges; collaboratively, students are now sent to the state's largest city.

A crucial, qualitatively different, factor potentially emerges, however, from his further reference to being "in an urban world." That is, increasingly, a true assertion, if one means the processes of technology, the dramatic changes in human relationships, social organization and land-use patterns, and the acquisition and exercise of power, that have long been identified as the indices by which urbanization is recognized and measured. "Urban" is not, simply, a place. It is that much, of course,

and we intend not at all a minimization of the central city and the people resident there. But it is also, more importantly a complex set of pervasive forces presently determining the essential features of this society. These forces have ever-more to do with power: power that accrues to those who render, with public accountability or not, political and economic decisions for the rest of us; power that resides with those who control the incredibly complex technological apparatus here and abroad, most commonly for private financial gain.

All of these, to varying degrees and in multiple ways, intrude into the life of that supposedly rural community in Ohio. As with nearly all communities in this society, this small city must cope with such large-scale issues as economic growth, stability, the press of mass media, youth attitudes, to cite the most obvious. And, one would suppose, the college can scarcely avoid its own implication in these issues. This seems particularly true where, although they continue to imagine themselves as isolated and essentially "out of it," the location of liberal arts colleges places them in actuality within the predictable development sprawl patterns of large metropolitan centers, or on the growth axes between such centers. The point remains: no community with which we are familiar can claim exemption from the compelling forces of urbanization.

Urban as inner-city, as a limited spatial category, also contains another serious deficiency. As has already been indicated, students are expected to see and understand "today's burden of urban stress" and the "conditions which have led to their being." It becomes all the more remarkable, therefore, to find almost no mention whatever, much less serious consideration, of the suburban role in urban metropolitan contexts. That the suburbs should command little student interest is itself easy enough to understand; our own work with students has only confirmed what others have previously found--many students, buttressed by the large and well-known amount of critical assessment of the middle-class, escapist, upward striving suburbanite, are now openly disdainful of whatever would

purport to "take them back." And, we would hypothesize, urban semester programs attract disproportionate numbers of such students. That attitude is certainly understandable, and we share it in significant measure. Individuals who actually conform to the stereotypical images of the suburbs are encountered, after all, with depressing frequency. But if understanding urban complexity and those places within the city that control change are in fact central to the rationale for moving numbers of college students from campus to city, those images may in fact be quite irrelevant. The National Urban Coalition's magazine, City, phrases it this way in an article pointedly entitled, "As the Suburbs Go So Goes the Nation":

> When we talk about the quality of American life, we actually are talking about the quality of life in America's metropolitan areas--since that is where nearly 80 percent of all Americans live. What happens to the suburbs in the remainder of this century will be the principal determinant of the quality of life in metropolitan America, for two reasons: first, the suburbs contain the majority of metropolitan Americans--a majority that is still growing--and second, they hold the key to the physical and social reconstruction of the cities.

Determinative political, economic, and social power reside outside the inner city, and, as City argues, that concentration can only be expected to further solidify as suburban populations grow and reapportionment maximizes their representation in local and national politics. Again, the implications seem self-evident; programs that purport to make of students sensitive observers and potential agents of change simply cannot ignore these larger considerations. Some have argued, and perhaps even believe, that because students may have grown up within a suburban context, these problems of understanding, perception and relationship are thus minimized; students already "know" the suburbs. This, we need scarcely indicate, is demonstrably false. Almost nothing within their experience, or within the curriculum of suburban high schools, permits these questions to be systematically considered, and students fare poorly when the issues are power: to zone, to control land use and development, to determine housing patterns, and so forth.

The implications of all this are several. Many students may indeed require exposure to the inner city; as we have already noted, such experience may be vital in the education of some students, whose ignorance of the larger city is difficult to overstate. To so limit one's understanding of "urban life," however, is to ignore those less accessible questions of power and process that shape both ghetto and our supposedly rural and suburban environments. The point is this: "urban" may well begin where one is. It is not inevitably somewhere else. We will return to this issue.

2. The problem with problems.

Given their new-found conscience regarding the city, as evidenced in programs placing students where "city" appears most blatant and abnormal, the accompanying emphases upon "problems" can hardly be thought unusual. As we have already noted, phrases like "the dramatic and gripping events of the city," or "the broad range of problems impinging upon the city" occur with pointed regularity. And small wonder; burned-out ghettos, snarled transportation, or street crime are problems of immense proportions, bearing upon the larger population in the most uneven fashion. Yet the admission, itself important, helps us only minimally, for the very usage of "problem," with the concomitant antecedent "solve," continues to perpetuate a language and an imagery damagingly inappropriate within the context of urban flux and dynamics.

That point may be worth pressing a bit. "Problem," as it appears in popular usage, borrows heavily from an origin within the physical sciences. All of us learned (very early on) that "scientific method" derived from the Natural Order of Things; to know--with precision and certainty--one performed those five or six steps, from "define the problem" to "implement the solution." That makes good sense, ostensibly. Orderly procedures permit both the handling of material objects with reasonable detachment and the controlled movement from one point to another, each designed to "find out." "Problem," in this context, would appear to involve a curiosity,

something not known or understood. To "solve" is to make evident. And it is the method that assures replication by the next person also seeking to "solve." "Right" or "wrong" has meaning only to the extent that we have followed, or not, accepted methodology.

The situation seems very different in the social sphere; when posed with "what is an urban problem," most individuals respond by indicating some phenomenon or event that violates their sense of propriety or oughtness. The very act of so identifying a particular aspect of the social fabric is to take what would otherwise be thought normal and to set it apart, to ask that it be eliminated or qualitatively changed. We make, in short, a value judgment. Urban problems, hence, so often thought of as objective realities "out there," become so only as we have already rendered a judgment "in here." Slavery, if we may invoke a very obvious example, was thought quite normal until someone, or a significant body of someones, rendered a judgment that declared it a pernicious "problem."

This is not an inconsequential point, for the power to define what is, or is not, a problem has critical implications for resolution. "Everybody knows" the presence of a "Black revolution" in this country; how, then, shall it be defined? Poverty, lack of opportunity, substandard schools, discrimination, riots, denial of human dignity--these are but several from the myriad of possibilities. The implications of each for action, however, vary dramatically; if one believes that "riots" are the fundamental issue, that will suggest corrective action very different from action premised upon "denial of human dignity."

Yet we have been surprised at the paucity of serious consideration this power of definition has received, especially within urban programs. The capacity to discriminate among problems, to press beyond the superficial, constantly gyrating crises of the moment, would surely be a pearl of considerable price, integral to the intellectual training of students. So, too, a deep interest in understanding and skepticism of, those institu-

tions and persons by whose power and authority this, and not that, is labeled "problem." Yet, by and large, we did not find it; most of us within the academy seem at least partially guilty of the intellectual sloth Frank Pinner warned against:

> Above all, we are gravely at fault if we accept the public's own definition of its problems and try to solve these as they are presented to us.

One of the reasons why that is so seems evident in the second major dilemma that inheres in the popular conception of "problems." What is seen as a problem, we would argue, finally depends in large measure on the richness of complexity and interrelationship the definer observes. And most folk are remarkably inept at precisely those points of complexity and interrelationship. Let us illustrate. Arguing largely from analogy to the land-grant university and the revolutionary changes it helped bring about in agriculture (to who's precise benefit is another question), Congress introduced Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965 with the following declaration: "For the purpose of assisting the people of the United States in the solution of community problems," the resources of higher education should be brought to bear upon them, "them" being "such as . . . housing, poverty, government, recreation, employment . . ." etc. (emphasis added). Conventional rhetoric, befitting the Congress.

The obvious common sense of this congressional dictum is quickly lost, however, in the larger issues it initially obscures. "Problems" are here presented, as commonly, in the form of "such as's," particular entities around which may be fashioned, it is supposed, not only conceptual but actual parameters. Additionally, it is assumed that for each there is a "solution"--the solving of that which has been isolated--at which point one moves to another problem and another solution. But we have already noted the degree to which such imagery is derivative from a primitive, mechanistic view of the physical sciences; as such, it simply does not

easily correspond to the nature and character of social flux and process. Such imagery is essentially static, and it presupposes self-containment and discreteness. Congress, of course, does not stand alone. No institution within this society can testify so eloquently as the college and university to fragmentation, the profileration of self-contained, isolated boxes. And nowhere do the limitations of the disciplines appear quite so evident as in their inability to accommodate sophisticated conceptions of "urban" and "city."

Hear John Bodine, president of the Academy of Natural Sciences:

> Urban problems are so interwoven, so interdependent, that scholars can only consider them together; in other words, it has been found necessary to consider the urban situation as a system in its own right, inescapably transcending the traditional disciplines.

What Bodine is insisting upon is recognition of the intricate, interrelated nature of urban complexes. Such complexes are, in important measure, "wholes," wherein action or events in one sphere are discovered, often belatedly and without prediction, to have exerted influence and change in spheres ostensibly far removed. Individuals, groups, structures, value systems, physical entities, patterns of communication, bodies of knowledge --these are but the most rudimentary elements that collectively begin to make up the incredibly complex maze we now know as "urban." And linking these together are systems of influence and power, systems that, often dramatically inconsistent and in tension with one another, determine shape and direction.

People who think about these questions with much sophistication have been compelled toward new imagery and new language to describe them. Phrases like ecosystems, process, interacting whole, units through time, tertiary effects, due dates, etc., represent the continuing effort at more-adequate understanding of urban dynamics. They are, at bottom, epistemological questions. How do we know? How do we know that we know? And how do we educate to know?

Lest the point remain obscure, an illustration from our own study may prove suggestive. What is poverty? And by what means might it be reduced within this most wealthy of societies? These two questions were initially posed to a group of graduate students almost two years ago as an element of our own experimentation with student-directed teaching. For an entire year this group of students, representatives of four academic disciplines, struggled to achieve a common definition of what they could collectively mean when using the generic term "poverty." For most, it seems fair to say, what had first appeared as nearly self-evident quickly became a conceptual nightmare, in which issues--relative vs. absolute; Black and White; young, old, disabled, widowed, dependent; economic vs. psychological; culture of poverty; social causation vs. individual pathology; powerful vs. powerless, to cite only those most obvious--could scarcely be avoided if real understanding was to be achieved. Yet, understanding was perceived as simply the antecedent to ameliorative public policy, at which point this group of students concluded with Herbert Gans that only as one understood the degree to which more-affluent groups within the society benefitted from the continued presence of the economically deprived could one begin to fashion a strategy for change. And such strategy, of necessity, would need to take seriously Hannah Arendt's assertion that most societal change cannot rely upon the altruism of powerful groups whose immediate self-interests are imagined to be threatened.

Commencing from that point, a different group of students (most of whom were also at the graduate level) has for this immediately past academic year sought to find those major social institutions that seem both causitive in the poverty cycle and at the same time vulnerable, a combination they concluded is evident within the public schools. And because power seemed primarily resident within the suburbs, their research centered upon the degree to which latent indications of dissatisfaction are discernible among affluent, politically moderate, middle-class, suburbanite students and their parents. The immediate objective: determination of the extent to which support might be aroused for radical alternatives

in public education, for a serious questioning of the credentialing system that continues to bar lower-class individuals from the usual channels of mobility.

The outcomes of this inquiry are not, at the moment, clear. But that is the lesser point to be made; although primitive still in conception and execution, these two groups of students (the second beginning where the first left off) reached the point of studying the school systems of affluent suburbs. Their concern was poverty. And almost nothing in the conventional wisdom regarding poverty as an "urban problem" would have led them to this examination of people and institutions rather far removed from the vicissitudes of central city life. It was, in short, an effort to work systemically, to understand relationships and to find sources of power. And it takes time.

We expected to find similar concerns and programmatic efforts within urban semester programs, and, to be sure, the language of "interdisciplinary" and "cross-disciplinary" appears uniformly throughout. Almost without exception, the framers of urban semesters at least intuit the overwhelming inadequacies of the disciplines. They want it to be otherwise. But "it" generally comes to little. "Interdisciplinary" becomes a euphemism for the serial presentation of several points of view clustered around a common theme, or, if really daring, it is the belabored effort of two or more academicians to communicate among themselves. Academic furniture is rearranged; if pressed, additional rooms are added to the intellectual house, creating the least possible discomfort for inhabitants already there. But little more.

Here begin substantial troubles. If urban complexes do in fact constitute "systems" in their own right, as Bodine insists, then the treatment of those systems as essentially a series of disparate categories may simply perpetuate the basic modes of thought that have themselves created the urban chaos we now wish to change. "Systems," of course, or "systemic

relations" are amenable to various interpretations, and they have become, unhappily, freighted with unfortunate connotations deriving from their use by technocratic "systems analysts," both military and otherwise. Whatever else, however, systemic inquiry directs attention not only to bodies of knowledge but more crucially to the connections and relationships that occur between and among them, to the ways in which (and under what conditions) pressure or behavior in one sector influences behavior in another. Attention is directed to process, to time and anticipation, to power. The imagery is dynamic and relational, where the very concept of "act" implies a reciprocal through which the act itself is no longer the same. In Ripley and Buechner's concise phrase, the concern involves an "interacting whole that evolves as a unit through time." Even the most cursory consideration of their generative phrases--interacting whole, evolve, unit, through time--bespeaks the issues at hand.

The point, really, is simple enough. The disciplines are but one, and not the most appropriate form for organizing knowledge regarding urban complexity. Yet the new paradigm, through which these difficult relational issues might be given order and logic has not yet emerged with any real clarity. That can hardly be thought unusual; the more puzzling problem for us has been the absence of visible concern within the programs we studied. Our expectation had led us to anticipate at least a minimal engagement with these epistemological perplexities by philosophically inclined faculty who, otherwise not at all challenged by "urban" matters, would find such conceptual problems of considerable moment. And beyond that kind of abstract inquiry reside the very substantial problems of translation into curricula much more in tune with urban metropolitan realities.

In sum: systemic thought is, in its fundamentals, the antithesis of discipline-oriented, fragmented specialization. How do we move from the latter mind-set to the former? Consideration of that question has scarcely begun. Its importance seems central.

IV. THE LIMITATIONS OF INTERNSHIPS AND THE VOLUNTARY ROLE

"Urban" is inner ·ty. "Urban" is a piecemeal series of problems. And "urban" is a study of what is. That latter premise seemingly accounts for the almost universal utilization within urban semester programs of internships, selected locations within the political, economic or social structures of the city. Here, it is supposed, students will really "see it as it is"; that is to say, they now stand, however tenuously and temporarily, on the inside, privy to experiences and knowledge not otherwise available.

Again, we admit the apparent logic in these expectations; certainly practice-teaching in an all-Black ghetto school, or seeking to ascertain some "vitally needed set of social insights" for, say, the city's planning commission is to be involved, for the student, as never before. But to what end? As a practical matter, many students, perhaps most, merely tread bureaucratic water; governmental agencies are not customarily organized in such ways as to easily accommodate the presence of an outsider, the more so when the sojourn is clearly temporary. The student is part-time, another necessity made virtuous on occasion when, in the name of a "pressing issue," he is simply told to "do a study," all the better if it "really gets beyond the superficial" and "stretches our minds." In our own experience, replicated elsewhere, both student and bureaucratic supervisor commend the activity, though neither will finally know exactly why.

Even in the finest of intern possibilities, however, two serious limitations seem to obtain. By its very nature, an intern position is based upon what is the case, at a given moment in time, and in a particular governmental or voluntary agency context. Even granting the dubious assumption that such involvement from within illuminates the purposes and decision-making machinery of the particular agency, the student must still determine the degree to which such purposes are worthy of support, or the degree to which his observations are more than idiosyn-

cratic, and hence capable of generalization. Yet, that is to demand of students what academics themselves cannot give; we simply do not know, with precision and understanding, "what is" in scarcely any complex metropolitan area. And the issues become magnified many-fold when we aspire to normative judgments regarding what ought in fact to be. Intern programs may, as advertised, provide students "maximum opportunity and responsibility to innovate, to pursue their interests while at the same time performing a service to the institution." The more likely, indeed the more rational, expectation, however, rather compels us to hypothesize that students are being schooled by the very institutions that account for much of our present social malaise, and by the very individuals whose own vested interests reside in seeing "urban" piecemeal--those self-same "city and state leaders, or experts in various phases of urbanology."

Secondly, and to our minds perhaps more importantly, intern programs place students in roles vis-à-vis the city that they are very unlikely to occupy again. "Work as administrative intern out of school administrator's office, a city councilman's office, or out of the office of a community organizer," as one program phrases it, has genuine appeal, and in the best of circumstances, affords the possibility of much substantive insight. But to what purpose? That same urban program, its advocates have insisted, enhances "the adult roles that the students will shortly be acting out as adults." How's that? In the mayor's office? In the school administration? Or as a community organizer? Perhaps so. But that such temporary locations within the fragmented political and social order of our time do in fact "illumine adult roles" is only to state the hope, not demonstrate the fact. From the suburbs they have come, and to the suburbs most liberal arts college students will most assuredly return, there to occupy such "adult roles" as dentist, housewife, businessman, minister, whatever. We, too, fervently hope that intern programs empower such students to live these roles out with more private meaning, self-assurance and public effectiveness than seems characteristic of present society. We do not now, however, see any rational or logical reason to believe they will.

A further variation on the intern theme derives from what we have just argued, one having to do with reinforcement of a seldom explicit, though almost always present, conception of the "adult role" as essentially voluntary. To be an "agent of change," hence, is to relate personally and immediately to other individuals--"other," by implication, usually meaning Black or poor or otherwise "disadvantaged persons." Again, we can hardly fault the sensitivities from which the voluntary role emerges. It is indeed the case that, within some (hardly all) contexts, personal relationships across racial and economic barriers in fact enhance one's capacity to see and feel. And it is possible--though contradictory evidence ofttimes appears overwhelming--that such empathetic relationships can and do motivate and direct human action. We ask again, however, to what end? Is "experience" as such adequate? Do programs that stress tutoring, for example, only reinforce a simple, personalistic understanding of ghetto life as one of personal pathology and individual underaccomplishment? Within our own inquiry, involving both students and a wide spectrum of adults, this personalistic attitude prevails above all others, the consequences of which are constantly manifest in activities that stress personal, person-to-person action. The middle-aged, concerned suburbanite continues, to the extent time is available, to tutor, to engage in clothing drives, to transport central city children into the suburbs for summer recreation, to operate "big brother" programs, etc. We do not demean these programs and the sensitivities that motivate them. But we increasingly believe that these <u>necessary</u> acts of personal charity and concern are widely perceived as <u>sufficient</u> responses to the crucial dilemmas of political, social and economic power that presently undergird societal injustice. Urban programs may in fact heighten personal awareness. They may, contrary to stated intention, simply solidify the voluntary role as the only viable one students see.

We cannot presently speak about these matters with real confidence, as hard and conclusive data regarding roles obviously must await longitudinal studies that accompany students well into the future. One program,

however, whose basis appears sounder than most, and whose director we adjudge as very competent, has sought an initial determination of the degree to which its hoped-for change in students did occur. Additionally, we talked for several hours with participants in the same program who, their semester completed, would soon return to their respective campuses. The doubts we have expressed in this paper were, alas, generally confirmed by both events:

1. Although the administrators of the questionnaire express doubt about the validity of the instrument itself, semester program participants were found to have decreased significantly (statistically) in "equalitarianism," as measured by the Multifactor Racial Attitude Inventory. In the study's own language: "It is hypothesized that decreases in genuine equalitarianism and open-mindedness may have been responses to a radically different environment, characterized by confrontation and intense, even threatening stimulation." It is a tentative finding, subject to the vicissitudes of the instrument itself, to the possibility that students entered the program with "unrealistic idealism, missionary zeal and desire to do good, out-dated liberalism." However one seeks to rationalize the findings (and the efforts may be completely warranted), the outcome appears to contradict the program's original assumptions. As the report stated, " . . .[urban] students were still significantly more equalitarian than both control groups and more open-minded than freshmen at the end of the study, but the [urban] students resembled their controls on equalitarianism and open-mindedness more than they did at the beginning." (Emphasis added.)

   Further evidence of the personal, voluntaristic stance is contained within the report, where it concludes that "the [urban] students maintain their original relatively low position on practical outlook, and increase strongly on altruism." These categories derive from the Omnibus Personality Inventory, in which altruism is defined as "trusting and ethical concern for the feelings and welfare of others," while "practical outlook" has to do, in part, with "interest in practical, applied activities."

2. These findings very much confirmed the impressions we formed when interviewing the same urban program students in the late spring of 1970; not one was genuinely conversant with issues of metropolitan power and with the decision-making machinery that largely governs the shape and quality of urban life, nor was this of any particular interest to them. None could articulate with any clarity the meaning of his urban sojourn for future roles he might live out, whatever those finally become. Indeed, most found this, too, an uninteresting question, predicated on a future orientation they largely rejected. As it were, the dominant image or impression was one of uncertainty and confusion; the urban semester was perceived as an isolated, self-contained experience--the "urban plunge," they said--whose meaning for and relationship to anything beyond itself was problematic or unknown. And the not unexpected immediate consequence of this uncertainty had to do with their pending return to the campus; not one could imagine, nor had sought to work out, a program of study within the traditional curriculum that would build upon and take seriously his urban semester. Nor could they, even when pressed to do so, imagine ways in which their own, newly-acquired insights might inform or even require varying kinds of educational reform in the college itself.

It was a strange afternoon, and a little sad; students seemed not to really understand, as Paul Goodman suggests, "that technology, civil law, and the university are human institutions for which they too are responsible."

V. ISOLATION FROM THE CAMPUS

> It would be expected that lessons learned while on campus will be put to the test during [the urban semester]. In turn, data acquired and questions raised . . . can be the subject of continued learning, testing, and inquiry when the student returns to campus and once again has on hand all the resources of faculty and library.

Perhaps it is simply part of the political rhetoric necessary to wrest from reluctant faculties such authority as is necessary to bring off-campus programs into being in the first place. Whatever the reason, nearly all liberal arts urban programs at least nod in the home campus's direction when describing themselves. Yet here, too, hope seems much at variance with what is known. And what seems known goes more or less like this:

> Colleges, virtually without exception, have organized knowledge into a series of conceptual categories called disciplines.
>
> Learning is imagined to consist in transmitting the information each discipline presently contains.
>
> The structure of the city, however, is increasingly recognized as demanding conceptual categories that transcend, and are significantly different from, the traditional disciplines.
>
> Learning, especially within the urban context, involves information, to be sure, but additionally demands elements of experience, the capacity to empathize, value judgments about justice and the future organization of the social order, that have at no time in recent academic history resided easily within the college's self-understanding.

By almost any measure, genuine reform of collegiate practices has been and remains exceptional, the very possibility bringing immediately to mind the handful of situations and institutions that, by their uniqueness, have become well-known to all. Nor are the reasons difficult to ascertain; our wholly un-original accounting would identify that minority of students whose acute discomfort with the academy's

present assumptions and organizational arrangements rather dramatically exceeds their vision of how it might be different, administrators who now use "financial crisis" as a convenient surrogate, but most of all a faculty that, in its confusion and general timidity, still refuses to acknowledge accountability to anything or anyone beyond themselves and the guilds to which they belong. There are, certainly, places and persons that rightly claim exemption from this standard indictment. But, we think, not many.

Not at all surprisingly, hence, no urban program with which we are familiar privately lays claim to satisfactory relationships with the campuses they represent. How could they? Even the awarding of credit remains a departmental decision at the home institution, subjecting students to the standard paraphernalia of "course work";

> The student in the . . . program will not, however, be on vacation in any sense of the word. There will be very definite academic and research-oriented activities which will include reading, interviewing, class attendance, observation, interaction, and eventually the production of acceptable papers.

We wish no unfairness. The particular program in question goes to considerable length in its insistence that "academic requirements" must be seen in the context of the "total range of learning-living-reacting-academic experiences which the student will undergo during this time." At the same time, however, it's defenders admit to "the full power of curricular academic control exercised by the faculty on each of the . . . campuses," and students are to be "subjected to all appropriate requirements such as curriculum committee study and approval."

In reality, urban programs not only exist some substantial geographical distance from the originating campuses (a factor that minimizes daily scrutiny), they are conceived on bases not easily reconciled with the

disciplines, and almost no liberal arts college has created an institutional arrangement within its curriculum that sustains the insights, experiences and learning introduced by the urban program. Liberal arts faculty, taken as a group, do not understand nor are they sympathetic to such learning. Like the 4-1-4 design now being implemented at a sizable number of institutions across the country, urban programs are, by the admission of many faculty, devices that permit students to go "do it." They are an interlude between, and not to be confused with, the genuine, "disciplined" education on the campus itself.

The consequences of this are several, not least being (based upon preliminary data) a disposition in an inordinate number of program participants to leave school. Small wonder. But that may only underline the basic tragedy; turned on, as it were, by a set of experiences they cannot possibly comprehend in a semester's time, they at least perceive that precious little within the traditional college will enhance that comprehension. And they leave. Which makes of the situation a self-fulfilling prophecy. And who can blame them?

In short, most liberal arts urban programs are conceptually limited by an understanding of urban that confines student activity and attention to inner-city Blacks, that utilizes self-evident "problems" as the basis for analysis, but does so in much the same discrete, box-like fashion characteristic of the disciplines. Most emphasize the "experience" of urban life, but that, too, remains highly fragmentary; almost no attention is given to the intricate and determinative web of power and relationships that ultimately govern large metropolitan areas, nor is attention given to (much less experimentation in) the building of alternative futures. And the program itself resides in isolation from the originating campus, barely tolerated.

What is left? To the extent our analysis reflects the actualities in urban semester programs, that is a legitimate question. When shorn of

their verbiage, "experience" is the salient feature that remains--experience in the strange and disconcerting society of the ghetto, its people, its distress, its physical squalor and bizarre emotional atmosphere; experience in coping, seeing, feeling, working; experience premised upon the assumption that "seeing" and "feeling" are attributes of understanding, itself a pre-condition to enlightened action.

We wish to honor this experience; as indicated above, the sheltered suburban enclaves from which come the majority of college students have themselves perpetuated a generally rigid separateness against which some students now rebel. But we have also concluded that such experience all too often is but another form of the middle-class voyeurism our society so frequently confuses with concern and involvement. It is not so much that we need "experience" the less but that we must have something else the more, and urban semesters, as presently structured, avoid that possibility.

VI. THE PUBLIC LIFE AND SOCIAL INVENTION

How might "urban" be otherwise approached within the liberal arts? (That is no easy question; as with most academicians, we are generally more adept at performing critical analytic surgery upon other parts of the body politic than upon the members wherein we live.) How it might be otherwise is, of course, strongly implicit within the strictures already leveled at existing programs. Stated simply, we envision a coherent program of study, experience and participation that would more seriously grapple with the value judgments, the philosophical dilemmas and the problems of definition inescapably inherent within "urban problems." It would take into account the meaning and consequences of systemic, holistic thought, hence with the relationship of suburb and exurbia to the life and fate of the inner-city. And it would take seriously power in its multiple forms, including those presently shaping our socio-physical environments.

Two themes not stressed thus far will help us imagine how such multiple emphases might be handled. These are premised on our belief that no program one semester in length can possibly address the limitations already identified, that what now seems desperately required are new means through which the liberal arts goes about its historic business. Ours is but one possibility; it will vary from location to location, as the needs, perceptions and settings of its implementers' vary. And within any given college its appeal could well be slight, seriously engaging only a small percentage of concerned students and faculty. That is probably much to be desired; as we argue more fully below, lack of genuine choice amid the multiple modes of learning now imaginable may constitute higher education's gravest sin.

We begin with two observations. One is Morton Deutsch's comment in The American College (1962):

> Fundamentally, education should look to the future. It should prepare its students to live in a world of new possibilities and of new dangers.

The other is Joseph Tussman's telling insistence that, however inarticulately, students are asking with unavoidable intensity (and we here paraphrase him): "Am I in or am I outside this society's culture, and upon what bases or rationale do I make the choice? What are the obligations I assume either way?" As is evident, the latter questions are deeply moral, calling into issue the legitimacy of American life and the terms by which one finally affirms participation; citizenship, if you like. The other speaks of the future, and of the competencies, knowledge and, perhaps most vitally, the vision and confidence that may yet permit men to manage "the dance of contingency." Colleges presently, of course, attend little to these concerns.

It is assuredly true that "citizenship" is a less-than-popular conception in our time amid sophisticated academics. Yet, we forget Aristotle's insistence that a citizen was an individual who had "the power to take part in the deliberations or judicial administration of any state," and that, in turn, a "state is a body of citizens sufficing for the purposes of life." "Power to take part in"--by that definition, nearly all of us have been effectively disenfranchised, and the exercise of citizenship--the public life--has in significant measure for all but a few degenerated into the modest act of voting. That is, on the face of it, a strange diminution of the traditional view that politics was simply the processes by which power was allocated and conflicts over competing ends adjudicated within the social institutions men create to manage their affairs.

Many reasons account for the privatism and personal isolation that seemingly characterize this society, for example, the growth and complexity of the bureaucratic corporate world, equally reflected within modern government. Perhaps no less central must be the society's monolithic educational system with its competitive, private conceptions of personal gain and worth. And when reinforced by a pervasive electronic mass media whose constantly repetitive judgment insists upon ever-expanding levels of consumption, can we wonder at the privatized impotence of people as citizens? How perplexed Aristotle would likely be.

This will no longer do; a verdict both ours and those upon whom society has most heavily leaned--the oppressed, the Blacks, youth, other minorities with whom is associated the rhetoric of participation, of power and of control, the while supposing they only sought what others had. But not they alone. For we affirm what others have argued; participation, personal involvement, "control over those events, forces, and institutions that affect our lives," is the language of evermore persons who are, by any traditional measure, among this society's most favored groups. Professionals, college-educated housewives, businessmen, nearly all of whom enjoy more-than-adequate levels of financial security, now protest. Without much noise, usually, and seldom in a concerted way. The uneasiness, even despair, however, is vividly real, as our own work for these past two years pointedly demonstrates. The numbers of persons so afflicted we cannot say; indeed, we scarcely know by what criteria the categories ought to be arranged. Yet something pervasive and of substantial importance is revealed in Norman Mailer's campaign assertion that the most depressing aspect of life in New York City is the complete powerlessness of its residents in the face of elephantine bureaucracy. People care, or more precisely, a substantial minority care. And they feel generally helpless, without competence or knowledge to act.

Well, why wouldn't they? Where in this society would they have acquired the skills, competencies, human quickening and imagination for life to function as citizens? Certainly not from traditional sources of nurture; churches, schools, government, social institutions now drifting and without apparent purpose. Yet such alternatives as have thus far been devised, of which urban semester programs are but one minimal expression, fan a thousand flames whose warmth scarcely cheers the closest of partisans. Small wonder that William Birenbaum depressingly concludes:

> . . . middle-class White youth . . . arrive at young adulthood having never been empowered to make important decisions and thus [have] virtually no understanding of what it means to be responsible for conduct pursuant to making decisions. (Cf. David C. Nichols and Olive Mills, eds. Campus and the Racial Crisis. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1970.)

Much of the common mythology regarding middle- and upper-middle-class life, especially suburban middle-class life, has insisted otherwise; activism, group involvement and institutional concern loom large in the lexicon of Good Things to Do. Such imagery contains a superficial plausibility, it should be noted, as disproportionate numbers of well-intentioned parents are grudgingly held hostage to the PTA, to multitudinous social organizations, to the church and its "Sunday School," to "civic improvement" associations, each in its season. Yet these involvements suffer the same deficiencies, because they share the same assumptions of the "voluntary" role we have already discussed. Closer examination of "citizen" activity almost invariably is either 1) superfluous affirmation of someone else's expertise (PTAs, for example) or 2) reactive complaint and fear, as disturbing change is confronted (opposition to gun control, urban freeways, low-income housing, to cite but three current issues in the Washington area) or 3) service-oriented, hence personal altruistic outreach from those who have to those who have less.

We do not totally disparage such activity. We do believe it dramatically limits the citizen role. Nor is this, we think, either exaggeration or caricature of where a sizable number of individuals presently are. Witness, for example, concerned parents who take seriously their own verbiage about "local control of schools," and as a consequence, attempt as a group to coherently imagine an alternative form within the school system and to press politically for its creation. Here, as elsewhere, we have watched a by-now familiar scenario, in which that handful of well-read, aggressive individuals are drawn together by their mutual discontent, only to talk endlessly and without exterior result, as each attempts to move the others. "Better" teachers in this subject, more counselors in that school--these symptomatic expressions serve only to becloud the much larger and pervasive dilemmas their reading of Silberman, Holt, Kozol, Illich, Goodman, etc., has intellectualized, and confrontation with their own children has made painfully existential. Occasionally, these exercises in words produce tinkering requests to school administrations or boards--we have recently observed parental action that secured temporary suspension of letter grades for primary children (in one school) and (in another) investigation of how the school building might be used more fully after normal hours. Yet, how pathetic; this is very dry toast indeed to persons from whose lips flow so easily the declamatory language of "schools within schools," "schools without walls," "free schools" and on and on. Note carefully that we speak not of "underprivileged" Blacks or "disadvantaged" minorities. The persons of whom we speak are the products of this society's colleges and universities; they have been proclaimed as educated, and certified with appropriate degrees, all the while innocent (and ignorant) of the most basic attributes of life together in a humane society.

These considerations loom very large for us in a time when "return it to the people" has become so fashionable. It is a fashion we surely wish to honor, but if local control is more than an exquisite form of extended privatism, we appear as a people ill-equipped to grasp its

promise. Citizenship, the public life, the political sphere--these merely foreshorten the longer definition that must include cooperation, competence, complementary relationships, knowledge and sensitivity. What are those competencies, for example, those analytic skills that permit sensitivities regarding human plight and injustice, loneliness, social rape, to transcend despair and powerlessness, to become answerable questions which lead to workable alternatives? What knowledge, skills and human warmth enable us, in concert with other concerned participants in the body politic, to hold in creative tension the seemingly irreconcilable conflict between the compelling need for comprehensive, regional, rational planning on the one side, and diversity, pluralism and local options on the other?

These and dozens like them are, in part, conceptual problems that ought to reside (centrally, one would suppose) within the liberal arts. But folks don't talk about them much; only Tussman's experimental program at Berkeley, to our knowledge, has addressed directly these abstract questions of citizenship in modern America. But they are also a good bit more; by definition, the "public life" is a group activity where people hold one another accountable, where people complement one another, where conflicts in ideology can often be translated into "let's find out." Such considerations move beyond intellectualizing exercises to concern for group process and compromise, to conscious investigation of those dynamics through which collective action is even possible. And, made all the more telling by its infrequent occurrence, they move to genuine human encounter; to community, as it were, to caring. However, having virtually enshrined individual competition in the name of personal freedom and personal accomplishment, college students (and the city-suburban residents they subsequently become) are largely paralyzed when confronted with collectively transforming a commonly-shared sensitivity into a program of inquiry and action. Well, that should have been predictable; from grade one, children have been taught that cooperation was a synonym for cheating.

How remarkable it is, in the strictest sense of the word, that colleges have so miserably misperceived or ignored what so many would have them see. Any one of the key terms in Deutsch's vision--future . . . prepare . . . students . . . live . . . world . . . new possibilities--dramatizes the pregnant meanings we believe inhere within the notion of citizen. To create, to anticipate, to invent, each in the name of a humane personal and institutional future. Yet every aspect of our two-year inquiry, in experimentation ranging from high school youth through undergraduates, graduate students, and several age levels of adult groups, has demonstrated the general incapacity of individuals to "think the unthinkable." That is, when the issue has to do with social invention, with questions of who and what we wish to be as persons and as a nation, and how we act upon those fantasies for the future, people seem uniformly paralyzed. To be sure, the words are often there, sometimes boldly, often wistfully, but almost always within an encapsulating vacuum. There are no visible, sustainable consequences. Ecology, thus, is reduced to vague agitation for "clean air and water," two-way bottles and white toilet paper. "Alternative life styles" (except for that tiny minority who, in presuming to opt out, simply leave crucial political, economic and social decisions to others) translate into matters of taste, still almost wholly dependent upon that vague unknown variously described as the "system" or the "establishment" (as though to name was itself to define).

But:

1. Buckminster Fuller argues that "Earth as spaceship" means an entirely different set of categories for self-description, based upon spherical, rather than plane, geometry. Notions of up and down, inside and outside, are now obsolete.

2. Many critics, as Edward Shorter phrases it, "develop the theme that modern industry and technology are turning into demons because they have started to model the social institutions within which they function in their own image." Men have become dependent variables, to be trained and used as the dictates of technology demand.

3. Adolescence, writes Erik Erikson, is "a period when the young person can dramatize or at any rate experiment with patterns of behavior which are both--or neither quite--infantile and adult . . ." It is a period of "moratorium" where much may be ventured without need to demonstrate traditional gain.

4. Also in company with many others, we have suggested above that the very concept of "urban" contains a logic premised upon systemic relationships, in many respects diametrically opposed to the piecemeal discreteness of the disciplines.

The truth or utility of these propositions is not here the basic issue. Multiplied many times over, they, or others equally alien to our constipated imaginations, will largely govern the world all of us will inherit. They are the stuff of social invention, of inventing the future, of anticipation and control. Yet our collegiate environments, of which curriculum is but one aspect, pose none of them as serious, curious and perplexing puzzles that may ultimately decide our collective futures. But if not there, where?

Let one minor example suffice. For some months, we have been posing, to a wide spectrum of persons, the question: "What might it be like, do you imagine, to live in a dome house?" Further, "What human aspirations do you suppose could be served through an economic commune, composed of several domes?" Geodesic domes, it should be said, have multiple characteristics, the most ostensibly notable of which is their remarkably minimal cost per enclosed cubic foot. Beyond that, however, abide those intriguing, perplexing enigmas of space and mind-set so fundamental to Fuller's thought; rooms without corners and straight lines, etc.

People are, predictably, both fascinated and uncomprehending. The overwhelming number do not even know what a geodesic dome is. Nor is explanation simple; as one leads such groups to probe a bit, they are rapidly failed by the standard categories--flat and cubistic--through

which we order our thinking and the world around us. They want to grasp the question, at least. But nothing experiential assists their desire, and thus far it has come to nothing. We will, in our primitive, initial fumblings, continue and expand this experimentation. That is not enough. Again we must ask, as several times previously, if not in the college, where?

We could go on at substantial length, though perhaps the point is made; we are presently persuaded that educational institutions in this society, however unwittingly, have seriously maimed the concept of citizen, and that few issues seem more basic to at least this nation's political order. And amid the multiple aspects that notion contains, grasp of and some control over our individual and collective future is pivotal. We are really not so far from John Fischer and his Survival University, designed ". . . to look seriously at the interlinking threats to human existence and to learn what we can do to fight them off."

A cheerless thicket of issues self-evidently remains: problems of organization abound, as do those of finance, faculty, form and will. On some of these we have much opinion and little knowledge; on others, even substantial insight and information, being idiosyncratic and localized, seem only minimally useful. We conclude, then, with a series of not wholly random considerations that, were it within our province to so implement, would figure centrally in any such program:

1. As a center, institute, department, program--call it what you will--this entity would exist as a genuine alternative within the liberal arts context. It would command three of the four undergraduate years, and would be founded in most liberal arts colleges.

2. Centered on the concept of citizen and social invention, its very reason for being would involve the struggle to rethink the forms within which knowledge is organized and understood. And it would begin with the basically moral and political question of whether, and on what

obligatory bases, participation in this society is even justified. The practical implications are several. In terms of curriculum, the usual time and subject lock-step have little meaning, hence courses and the disciplines as such would be generally abolished. Basic themes provide coherence and purpose. One may still learn chemistry, for example, or biology--or any other traditional discipline--but such learning occurs not in and of itself but because various aspects of the society that alarm and threaten us are explicable only from a disciplinary base. One can scarcely comprehend the fundamentals of ecology, for example, without recourse to the physical and natural sciences. But chemistry, as an instance, would be taught very differently in such a context, and the laboratory of a large industrial plant might prove much the more satisfactory locus than the college's chemistry department.

3. This kind of a program would, purposefully and directly, emphasize the nature and consequences of urbanization's pervasive powers and forces observably at work within the neighboring environs of the campus. Urban semesters in the "city" may indeed remain important, but largely because they permit particular exposures--to power and to people--within the more general perspective.

4. The "public life," we have argued, by definition requires collective, cooperative, compromising sensitivities in those who are its actors. Any program must honor these attributes by creating them within the program itself. That is, the dynamics of group process or, perhaps more usefully, the building of community, would seem not only objects of intellectual curiosity, they are issues of lived experience. Such collaboration as is here suggested has many possibilities within the more formal elements of inquiry. In our own experimentation we have sought to divorce teaching from the power of examination and certification; accountability occurs primarily among the students themselves. No movement occurs except as the group collectively defines what that movement can and ought to be. The seminar has parameters (of place, expectation, the possibility of collective failure, etc.), but within them definition and methodology must come principally from the seminar's members on the basis of their own interaction. The group cannot have (because it does not permit) individuals "doing their own thing" as a private matter. The ultimate expression of this accountability is a common grade, arrived at in open discussion by the group itself.

The "public life," life as "citizen," is equally possible, however, in the living arrangements students adopt. There seem few overwhelming constraints, for example, to the deliberate, self-conscious testing, in microcosm, of the many forms of social organization students have heretofore mostly read about. Why, in refelction, have dormitories not been utilized with much more flair, originality and intent as contexts for this kind of experimentation? The possibilities seem both exciting and of importance. Yet only rarely have students been permitted and encouraged to create, for purposes of personally testing, differing political regimes or social arrangements.

Beyond those ubiquitous cubes in which students are presently domiciled, however, occur other possibilities, experimentation with forms of physical shelter about which students presently know virtually nothing. Domes, inflatables, and structures made of polyurethane foam, as examples, are inexpensive; they develop mathematical skills and a competence with one's hands, and they introduce very different ways of conceiving space. Perhaps more fundamental still, we are intrigued by the use of dramatically different materials and forms as means through which our incredibly limited views of the possible, the thinkable, can be challenged and rearranged. It is not, we think, a particularly fanciful notion, coming as we have, in concert with a goodly number of other like-minded souls, to believe that learning requires caring and creative skills as well as mind.

5. "Urban," we have insisted, is operable where you are. That may be worth saying again, in part because we think the first four points just offered are but, in important measure, prelude or antecedent to potentially different "town-gown" encounters or even collaboration than is customarily observed. We have elsewhere elaborated the theme of "college as consciousness," a not wholly satisfactory phrase that represents most briefly, an argument which takes seriously recent theories of life-time learning. It would seek to implicate the college as a setting wherein, or out of which, the problems of a people seeking to cope with ever-more-pervasive change could be at least recognized and, we think, responded to.

   Urbanization and the forces within it are perhaps even less understood by many small-community officials and residents than they are by most students. It is a matter of the same questions raised earlier regarding such analytic skills and insights as permit individuals to collectively weigh, decide and act. We suspect this may be critical for small

community after small community. We also believe there exists here as-yet unexplored opportunities for educating both students and adults, often together and in some form of sustained inter-action. Only rarely has the liberal arts college imagined these community concerns to be its own.

6. We have, on occasion, let the imagination wander even further to visualize clusters of the centers or programs within a given region. For example, states, large counties, or on ecologically identifiable territory (like a major river basin) might well constitute an area within which several colleges, through their respective centers, would find collaborative activity beneficial.

   A variety of admittedly prosaic possibilities come immediately to the fore--sharing information, ideas, students. Much more seems potential, however. A network of centers might well devise arrangements for probing, in their respective areas, the multiple aspects of some encompassing issue from which could emerge insight and understanding of the whole that no single program would itself achieve. Too, ongoing activity and inquiry might be implemented whose life was open-ended; that is, students and community residents could systematically build upon and extend what their earlier counterparts had already done and learned.

   And--no small matter--the network idea contains the possibility of linking together individuals and groups who, attempting to think and act otherwise, perceive themselves and are perceived by others to be largely alone, isolated and without sources of encouragement and intellectual nourishment. A network creates colleagues. It demonstrates that multiple modes of education are in fact possible and that they contain within themselves the "different drummer," the beginnings of alternative reward systems, alternative sources of personal affirmation.

   We have been deeply moved throughout these two years by the inevitable drama acted out on very nearly all the small college campuses we have visited: with dispiriting regularity, a group of generally alert and inquiring students, two or three discouraged (usually junior) faculty, and a sympathetic dean rehearse their belabored efforts of months, even years, to little avail; their impotence seems complete contrary to their colleagues' opinions, however, they belong within a vanguard whose numbers increase daily. They need to know this. But why would they? A network of centers or programs might well sustain this vital function.

Well, enough of conceptual matters. Much more could, and perhaps should, receive additional comment. That will come, from us and from others, as the actualities commence to match the visions. Can they? That question may merit something more than a passing nod.

VII. NOTES ON THE PURPOSES AND POLITICS OF ACADEME: OR, CAN IT REALLY BE DIFFERENT?

> What was clear to most friends of the progressive persuasion was the almost immovable nature of the traditional [academic] institutions . . .
>
> Frederick Rudolph, describing the 1920s.

We have not, it would appear, come very far. Our bookshelves are laden these days with a remarkable array of scholarly books that purport to order, rearrange, or simply defend the institutions of higher education. Most are loaded with imperatives ("universities must . . . ") and all bespeak a sense of critical urgency. And yet, for all the immense verbiage and seven years of open, often strident student protest, Riesman's "snake-like procession" appears to continue its generally monolithic domination.

Why is that? How is it possible that academics and the institutions they inhabit can remain so impervious to fundamental, purposive change or, in its name, simply proliferate such inadequate substitutes as urban semesters or "experimental courses" in this or that? That question, too, has been the recipient of countless treatises and we profess no gifted wisdom regarding it. But out of our own experimentation these past two years have emerged several thoughts that may be helpful. These remarks, then, are addressed to that handful of administrators, faculty and students who we have encountered on nearly every liberal arts campus we have studied who recognize that guild training is not education. They are thoughts that, at least presently, make some sense to us. And they are directly concerned with the use of power; two kinds, really.

1. The Power of Conceptual Clarity.

> Conceptual clarity is a gratuitous insistence among men for whom rationality is presumed a way of life; does one teach a magpie to suck eggs? Yet the bulk of this paper has been an effort to demonstrate the conceptual inadequacies in the area of urban studies. Let us press the question further.

a. The concern is the liberal arts college. And colleges are not universities, a crucial distinction much too often obscured within the fuzziness of "higher education." One is, or aspires to be, as Seymour Lipset so bluntly states it, governed by "norms," by a "highly specialized and segmented system" whose "primary function . . . is scholarship." And that is all save for the production of "apprentice scholars." Colleges, on the contrary, have traditionally insisted their reasons for being were clearly otherwise; the following, taken from the self-description of one well-known college, is not untypical:

> . . . a curriculum tailored for each individual student to produce learning that will result in an independent person concerned with the problems of the world.

These conceptual distinctions, we need scarcely point out, are not much discernible in the real world, not because colleges and universities look alike--they usually do not--but because they share a single mode of organizing knowledge (the disciplines) and a common reward system (based on an aspiration toward research and publication). Which is to say that in its essentials, whatever the language employed may say to the contrary, the college is in actuality but a pale imitation of the university. It employs the same box-like, fragmented, discipline-oriented structure and, however short of the ideal they may fall, most of its faculty reserve their highest esteem and accolades for the brethren who are presently "expanding the boundaries of the discipline." Many academics continue to insist, and some may even believe, that such guild training is in fact education. It is, in the judgment of higher education's swelling army of angry critics, a cuckoo clock posing as a cathedral.

These distinctions--education vs. training, and college vs. university--seem crucial because they enjoy the virtues of being historically defensible and presently useful. They confront immediately what most academics never really knew or prefer to ignore: if education is in fact our objective, then fundamental reform is unavoidable, but if not, let us at least honestly acknowledge the dichotomous absurdities that presently exist between professed intent and actual doing.

b. Even the "college" is an inadequate category. That is, one does not change "higher education" or the "university" or even the "college," as so many have eagerly, if not arrogantly, insisted. Such insistence suggests that these images point to something "real," entities easily transmutable from one form into another. Yet even the slightest knowledge and thought will, or should, persuade us otherwise. Colleges, even the simplest, are not unitary entities, but administrative domiciles, the inhabitants of which by no means share wholly agreed upon values and objectives. Too, beyond this internal complexity, colleges are "systems" that penetrate, influence, are manipulated by, the multiple other social systems with which they co-exist. They have vague, often indistinguishable boundaries that shade into local (and sometimes state) government, and into a myriad of economic, financial and voluntary systems and institutions.

Small wonder, then, that much of the current literature keeps groping for keys several notes higher than the piano can play. Institutional change is almost never the total, rational, logically induced movement from one arrangement to another that such literature seems to assume. Paul Goodman states the issue rather well:

> . . . all the answers I believe in are piecemeal, small step-by-step. . . . They're not answers which will wipe out "the system" . . . From our point of view when you wipe out the system, you get another system. The important thing is to loosen the system. And you loosen it by 2 percent of this, 3 percent of that . . .

"Loosen up the system"--that, we think, is the seminal phrase. It is not wholly incidental to point out that Goodman's 2 or 3 percent mentality is almost totally opposed to the social engineering which hides in most prescriptions for academic reform. But it transcends the mere reshuffling of what now is. Indeed, for us as for him, "loosening the system" is simply to insist that learning (or education) is far more wondrous and diverse than we have been schooled to believe, and that a multiplicity of learning contexts really ought to characterize the nature of life, including the liberal arts. Experimentation, the construction of alternatives, enhanced and self-conscious attention to what might be--not as an imposition, hence substitution for the disciplinary structure that now is, but as that which exists along side of.

In bluntest terms: too many persons who rightly press for fundamental change seem to suggest--they may not so intend--a superior morality that demands and advocates an either/or position, the throwing out of what is before we can have what ought to be. Maybe at this point in time, the posture is more appropriately both/and. Pluralism of possibility, rather than simply a new imposition, would seem to us the only position conceptually defensible, at least for the present.

2. The Power of Countervailing Interest Groups.

Well, who can possibly quarrel with the argument thus far? Conceptual clarity after all is simply to have some reasonable notion of that about which one is speaking. A genuine dilemma much too frequently occurs, however, at precisely this point, for most professors retain a delightful propensity to believe, or say they believe, that intellectual clarity is both a necessary and sufficient condition for virtuous change. Social change, it has been said, certainly can, usually does and most assuredly ought to derive from the application of superior logic, rationality and knowledge. If we but carefully analyze the situation, and marshall the arguments in sufficiently careful prose, their self-evident rightness will persuade and move. Well, again, who wishes to dispute that? Professional journals without end testify to the importance of this process; the health and size of the disciplines speak of its soundness, and a diverse clutch of semi-mythic symbols support it: "community of scholars," the "pursuit of truth," etc. Charles Frankel's magisterial aloofness says it best: " . . . free scholarly inquiry is inquiry controlled and governed by scholars in accordance with their own standards."

The reader scoffs, and rightly so, as the conviction has steadily grown that such language has been a semantic gossamer attempting to veil faculty self-interest. Yet we have observed and counselled with a wide variety of situations wherein the rules imposed were premised upon an image of "learned, rational men" and "disinterested truth." The scenario, thus, went something like this: a student or a group of students becomes enamored of "a good idea." And he (they) concludes that room should be found within the curriculum wherein that idea or event or possibility might be variously explored. Often, if the idea has visibility and appeal, the group expands, frequently to include one or more faculty who assist in the preparation of a "proposal."

Meetings abound, and for good reason; few precedents exist for most students when the task is the collective act of subordinating their multiple visions to a single, coherent, defensible document. Problems abound, too, in significant measure because, by their very nature, proposals for change are declarations of inadequacy. Traditional practice is asked to admit its own past deficiencies and amend what it does, or provide legitimation for that which will. More than that, the power to pass judgment resides with the very group being asked to change or to make accommodation to what is being petitioned for.

And so it goes. Proposals are assembled with such clarity and conceptual rigor as their designers can muster, at which point it is supposed that the appropriate faculty authority--some euphemism like Committee on Standards, which means academic gatekeeper--will rationally judge the proposal's merits, or lack thereof, and provide room within the intellectual house, or not.

We can hardly be surprised at what eventuates from this process, given the nearly inexhaustible possibilities faculty can exercise when confronted with challenges to their own carefully defined prerogatives. Committees may study proposals indefinitely, they may simply table them if the climate for "rational debate" is thought to be absent; they may be refused because they "lack sufficient rigor" or because they seem wholly impractical, "physical plant and financial condition being what they are." Or, they may be rejected because they threaten to diminish departmental or disciplinary primacy, or are perceived to enhance one department at the expense of another, or others--in cost, size and/or reputation. Whether such considerations are in fact valid--and they often may indeed be--is finally of little moment, for in any event, the results are dispiritingly similar: student-initiated proposals for institutional change, most particularly where curriculum alternatives are the issue, have been uniformly dismissed in most colleges we have studied, a finding repeatedly duplicated elsewhere. And in those exceptional instances where approval was initially granted, the life of experimental programs has usually been highly precarious and short, most especially where genuine reform or alternative (as opposed to "a new course" in this or that) has been sought.

"What, then," we have frequently been asked, "does one do?" To the extent that senior faculty (and those who so think) are permitted to determine and impede the fate of academic

reform in the name of professional standards, academic "appropriateness," "rational discussion," and departmental requirements, not much. In such terms, reform, alternative, change--whatever the language--are by definition suspect because they come from and drive toward viewpoints and expectations outside what is now commonly accepted academic procedure. Such efforts, language and avenues of approval by implication deny the fundamental power, the political process at work. And to the extent that student or faculty petitioners accept the half-myths of rational persuasion, the results can hardly be other than predictable.

The point is this: although the rhetoric suggests otherwise, the issue is one of power, the power to deny or accept, and who shall be permitted to exercise it and on what terms. And that is not a self-evident notion; as Harvard's Stanley Hoffman rightly observes, the university "is probably the only instituion that recoils before the notion that it is a political system . . . most academics and university administrators reject the idea with indignation."

If political process resides at the heart of academic life, as we have here argued, at least three possible avenues for its explicit use seem possible:

a. Faculty may choose to reform themselves and expand their bases for decision-making. That possibilities exist here we do not deny, and as the pressures, hence the plight, of academic life become increasingly exacerbated, one might reasonably conjecture that their own self-interest will compel greater attention to various alternatives. As a principle to be relied upon, however, that conjecture would seem highly ethereal. Irving Kristol's recent observation appears the more probable:

> So the beginning of wisdom, in thinking about our [colleges], is to assume that the professors are a class with a vested interest in, and an implicit ideological commitment to, the status quo broadly defined, and that reform will have to be imposed upon them as upon everyone else. ("A Different Way to Restructure the University." New York Times Magazine, December 8, 1968.)

b. Or, as some students and a handful of faculty have already argued for several years, the game is indeed power, meaning "we shall confront the institution as one power block among the several now evident." Well, yes. But that has generally meant activity limited largely to the campus community itself, where it has been imagined that power would be found in simple numbers or in one's capacity to disrupt normal campus life. The dilemmas such posturing creates would seem to require no additional comment here.

c. A third possibility--and one not anywhere, to our knowledge, carefully developed--begins with two observations, the first from Clark Kerr:

> The really big power battles are not so much on as off the campus.

The second from Ralph Dungan:

> . . . the fact that major reforms in education have occurred in the past predominantly as a result of external stimuli suggests that there is only limited capacity for internally generated reform . . .

The implications seem clear enough; if the concern and intent has to do with how a generation of college students will be educated to cope with and shape a more-humane society, then many persons beyond a college's faculty have legitimate bases for expecting to be heard. Education, as opposed to disciplinary training, is a marvelously complex, multifarious process, in which the transmission of specialized knowledge remains important, to be sure, but hardly determinative. In that process, as Peter Schrag has well said, the Ph.D. is a "journeyman, capable of directing apprenticeships in his specialty, but has he any more claim on the direction of a general curriculum than the student?" Or, we must add, has he any more claim than the professional, the lawyer, the corporation executive, the city planner, the housewife, the legislator? Such, we are inclined to believe, constitute the sources of Dungan's "external stimuli," and as such--as forms of countervailing power--they seem vitally useful to change on campus.

Perhaps, then, it is possible to imagine a rather different scenario. Indeed, it is already beyond imagining, for we have been experimenting after a fashion on one mid-west campus where the necessary combination of persons and institutional uneasiness seem to be present. We do not know, at this writing, whether this combination is also sufficient. Alternatives may come into being at this particular college; perhaps not. But, at a minimum, the ground rules promise to contain elements not customarily present.

In many of its particulars, the scenario shares much of the first. Ideas are developed, especially in concert with faculty also distressed with the quality of professional and personal life within the "liberal arts." Students still do, as they say, their homework, marshalling such conceptual clarity and sophistication as their imaginations and skills permit and that warrants emphasis, given students' penchants for re-inventing what already is. At the particular college in question, the alternative has been built around environmental concerns. Not simply additional course-work, it proposes a two-year alternative within the traditional four-year program. Any such alternative, we gratuitously add, contains dramatic implications for the college's larger life and, normally, would have almost no chance for adoption.

But before permitting its entry into the college's political processes, students--at least this group of students--have sought to take seriously the possible meanings of countervailing power by enlisting the support and endorsement of numerous persons and institutions within the larger, immediate community. For example, these students discovered that the president of a large, locally based, industrial firm, and one of the college's benefactors, both understood and lauded this new possibility; so, too, did the city's director of planning. Support was also secured from city officials, including the mayor. And perhaps crucially, there is now pending the possibility of modest foundation funding.

The issue is simple enough, really. Faculty--sitting in committee--will still render ultimate decisions regarding programmatic life or death. We do not quarrel, at least here, with that. But in the deliberations preceding that decision, a wide spectrum of opinion and political weight must be confronted and response made. For faculty to dismiss a handful of students because they threaten--or are perceived to threaten--accustomed prerogatives is one thing. To explain--or explain away--their reaction to a remarkably diverse number of concerned persons outside the immediate physical confines of the college is quite another matter.

We do not at all deny the potential consequences of openly encouraging the "political process." As academicians ourselves we know something of and have sympathy for the long, often tortuous route that has characterized the growth of academic freedom. But at least two considerations seem immediately inescapable, one of which must be the degree to which academic freedom is absolutely dependent upon a society willing to grant it. And we argue nothing unknown or startling when we insist that much empirical evidence points to deep disenchantment with higher education's past ways of conducting its business. And secondly, academic freedom is, by definition, the right to inquire and to transmit the fruit of that inquiry without interference. We in the college and university, however, have come to believe that that transmission was itself "to educate"; nay, that such transmission was the only legitimate mode of education permissible within the institution's format, and that no one but, euphemistically, "academic peers"--individuals schooled and certified to think alike on these matters--have any justifiable right to be heard. That is a noble sentiment, not devoid of self-serving delusions. And it will no longer wash. Nor should it.

Such is the vision we presently entertain. We do not know with any assurance that it will or even should command the talent and energy of those for whom it is intended, although encouragement has emanated from college and community alike. That the liberal arts must crucially invest, and soon, in visions appropriate to anguished life in a deeply anguished society we have not the slightest doubt.